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LAPD Concert Band

BY MICHAEL ELLINGTON

What do historical opera, Beatle John Lennon and silent movie sound tracks have in common? They're all touchstones in the musical development of the subject of this month's Los Angeles Police Concert Band Member Profile. Meet French horn player Lindsey "Link" Harnsberger.

Some musicians were assigned an instrument in elementary school, and

many stay with that first instrument. Others sample a variety of possibilities. Link Harnsberger falls into the latter category, sort of. His was a musical family. His mother played piano so well that she was offered a scholarship to study in Rome. She turned it down to study library science instead. His father played "recreational piano." So naturally, Link started playing piano at an early age and later transitioned to double bass.

Upon entering high school, in his words, "I wanted to play in band and needed to pick a band instrument. I loved The Beatles and wanted to play the instrument John [Lennon] was holding on [the album cover of] *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. The French horn. The rest is history."

While in high school at Don Bosco Technical Institute, Link started writing music for the band. It was through his efforts to develop "composer's chops" that he started playing other band instruments to better understand orchestrating. He was especially drawn to the



Lindsey "Link" Harnsberger.



Link with cast of *Golondrina*.

baritone saxophone and bassoon, but stuck with the French horn. In addition, he found opportunities to play with the Monterey Park and San Gabriel Valley Concert Bands. His college years at the University of Southern California found him successfully pursuing a degree in music composition. While there, he joined the USC Concert Band, under the direction of Art Bartner.

He also had the great honor of studying with Morten Lauridsen, the composer of arguably one of the most definitive pieces of choral music of the last 50 years, *O Magnum Mysterium*. It tells the story of the birth of Jesus in sensitive, layered and shifting vocal harmonies.

When he's not rehearsing or performing with the Los Angeles Police Concert Band, Link plays with the La Mirada Symphony and the Famous Players Orchestra. This interesting group, according to their website, "draws upon historic orchestrations used by movie theater orchestras of the silent film era, and performs this music in programs as accompaniment to live screenings of silent-era films." As they describe it, this is an almost forgotten genre that all but faded into obscurity with the advent of the "talkies."

He also works with the Los Angeles Unified School District's Office of the Inspector General, what he calls "the detective unit." He is part of a team that keeps "the School District safe from fraud, embezzlement and other crimes."

No one has ever asked Link why he composes music, and

he's composed a wide variety. He likens composition to "a massive machine made up of sounds that can be blended into all the emotions and moods imaginable." His operas spotlight struggle and confront atrocities. His first effort, *Golondrina*, not only showcases his composing skills, but also reveals the little-known story of one woman's fight to preserve the buildings and historical importance of Los Angeles' oldest avenue, Olvera Street. An upcoming work will focus on local Japanese concentration camps. He says he'd "love to find the right film director for sound tracks, opera directors, orchestral directors and small groups that want more music."


For more information about the Band, see our website at www.lasown.com and contact Jim Starr, executive director, at sngcop@aol.com. For greatly appreciated donations, please go to www.lapolicefoundation.org, and in the "Comments" box, put "For the Band." ♦



Link with Prof. Lauridsen.

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